

COPIES

**Friends of Mineral Lake
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August 20, 2010

Lewis County Commission
Chairman P.W. "Bill" Schulte
351 NW North Street, 2nd Floor
Chehalis, WA 98532-1900

Dear Chairman Schulte,

This letter will serve as a follow up of the information I provided and of the request I made to the Lewis County Commission on Monday, August 16, at your regularly scheduled meeting. After my presentation Chairman Schulte asked me to pen a letter. This is it.

We would like the commissioners to champion, actively support, cooperate and be involved with the effort to purchase the 2200 acre Mineral Lake area property that Forecastle Timber Company has proposed to develop. We want public ownership. We would like this commitment in the form of a resolution or some other written form or document that clearly identifies this effort as a high priority for the Lewis County Commission and the people of Mineral and Lewis County.

We are not asking Lewis County to foot the entire cost. Rather, we believe it would take a consortium of government agencies or offices, plus private donors to purchase the property from the present owners. What follows is a preliminary list of potential participants:

State and Federal Earmark Money
Washington State
 Parks and Recreation
 Department of Natural Resources
 Fish and Wildlife Service
 Conservation and Recreation Office
United States
 Military
 Fish and Wildlife
 Forest Service
 Department of Agriculture
 Department of the Interior
 National Park Service

Tacoma City Power
Nisqually Land Trust
Cascade Conservancy Land Trust
Mineral Lake Land Trust (if formed)
Nisqually Indian Tribe
University of Washington School of Forestry
American Legion
Lion's Club
Duck's Unlimited
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Numerous private foundations, companies, clubs, and individuals

The WS Parks and Recreation, WS Department of Natural Resources, and the WS Fish and Wildlife actually have land acquisition departments and land acquisition needs. The WS Conservation and Recreation Offices have over 20 grant sources that they can draw from in awarding grants. I have visited all of these offices. Their staff have big ears. They are citizen friendly and are very informative.

The theme of the management of this area would be "conservation", wise multiple use by people, wildlife, fish, and a diverse plant community. The goal would be to blend all of these uses together into the best possible mix. In the years ahead this could benefit tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, millions of people for perpetuity. The following list includes some of the possible activities on the 2200 acres:

Walking, jogging, and hiking
Horse trails, *bicycle paths*
Camping and picnicking
Swimming and boating
Fishing and hunting
Wildlife habitat preservation and enhancement
Photography
Public access to 360° panoramic views stretching for miles
Bird and wildlife watching
Native plant arboretum
Biology, ecology, and history education
Preservation of natural shoreline of lake, pond, river, stream, and the glacial river
Harvest of timber and specialty forest products
Sale of rock

As an example of a pet project I would like to see accomplished is a campground designed by, and built by, handicapped people for handicapped accessibility – a national model, a source of tremendous pride for all handicapped citizens.

Timber and specialty forest products harvest and user fees could help with maintaining this public forest.

Presently, there is very limited public access to Mineral Lake and no public access to Mineral Creek. This area is ecologically diverse and environmentally sensitive. Any development of the area has to be compatible with the environment. Forecastle's plan is not compatible and would be a catastrophic loss to the environment and the people.

We believe public ownership would be a greater economic engine over the long run to the Mineral area and the county than the Forecastle development plan. There is a lot of environmentally non-sensitive land available for development in the Mineral and eastern Lewis County area.

Mineral is not comparable to any other communities in Lewis County. We are not on a major highway, and Mineral Lake is the largest natural lowland lake in the County. Mineral has its own unique qualities and these qualities need to be captured and conserved, not destroyed. Mineral Lake and Mineral Creek are true gems.

The cost of high density development in the Mineral area is prohibitive. If the development is allowed, then there is going to be costly road, fire protection, water, septic, and traffic congestion problems. Mineral area's topography makes high density development totally impractical and unreasonable. A 2200 acre remote gated community would be a great breeding ground for crime.

If the Lewis County Commissioners will whole heartedly support this public ownership concept, it can be accomplished. The Commissioners' involvement would add great credibility to our effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ron Nilson".

Ron Nilson, coordinator
Friends of Mineral Lake